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The  
Phoenix Lyre  
—  
Oswald Davis



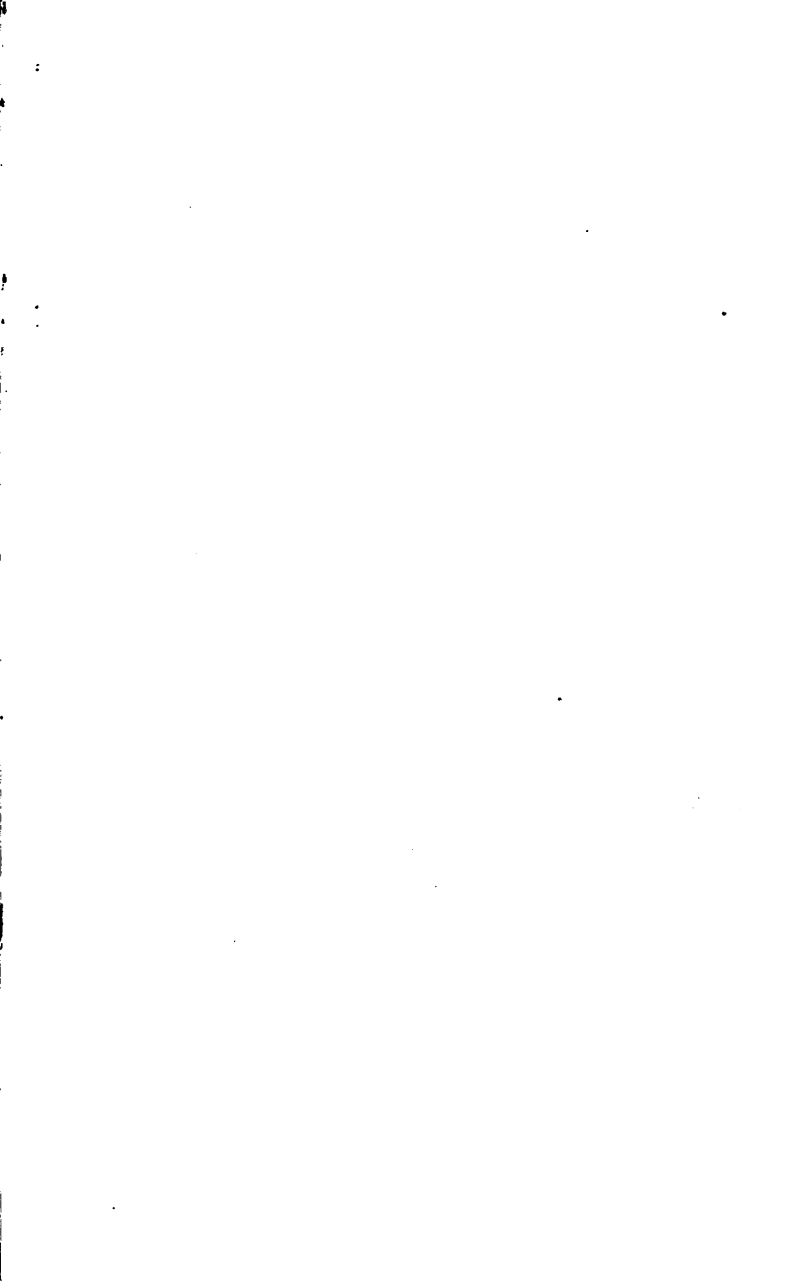
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# THE PHOENIX LYRE



# THE PHOENIX LYRE

BY

OSWALD DAVIS

LONDON

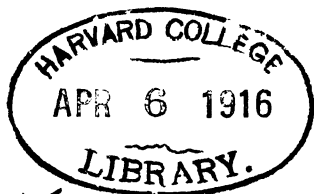
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*Fine money*

**To**

**MY MOTHER**

**IN TRUE ADMIRATION AND WITH DEEP LOVE**

**I Dedicate this Book**



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For my eye

No molten roseate arc of a sun-swollen sky :

Fume and pallor of pearl

In the mists that uncurl,

Fringe of fawn on the dead dun cloud's shredded

husk,

Clotted silver on grey on the lip of the day

In the dawn or the dusk—

For my eye !

Not for me

Light-liveried Spring, green glut of the emerald

lea :

The rib in the roll

Of the heath, and the bole

And blench of lone trees, and the hue of the throe

Of the long furrow's dip, and the seed-tawny tip

Of bare blades bending low—

These for me !



# THE PHOENIX LYRE

---

## ON THE HILLS—WORDSWORTH-LAND

*HIGH Seer! choice issue of the Lonely Loins  
Nature but bows to by the urgent lapse  
Of sanguine Ages and upon the couch  
Of Centuries, to thee I dedicate  
This brief memorial, testimony frail  
To Springs, within the drought of times unsluiced,  
Or too fastidiously aloof, in thee  
Perpetual found!*

I

(1)

I love these manéd, shocked, and meagre Hills :  
Their shape is eloquence, like broken speech.  
In vain the tumid peak's throned plenitude



## *The Phoenix Lyre*

And lax domed breasts, that, towering sumptuous,  
urge,

'Twixt cleft of bosom, claim to couch the sky :

The heart is small, and that most dearly holds

Which in the tie of frugal filament

It may keep kin and constant to itself.

Nor vaunt the languid veinings of the vale,

Voluptuary verdures : for these Hills,

Sundered and heaped, ridged, ribbed, and wrenched

awry

In writhing limb from many a tortuous spine,

By tenuous feature flesh a god whose soul,

'Neath downy shoulders somnolent and smooth,

Adonis were, of gaunt Antæus feigned.

(2)

Ah, vain his image whose swart columned thigh

Perpetual took from Earth but ruder wrath,

To figure forth their presence : gazing thus,

Narcissus-like in those still lakes, twofold

Their seeming :—such as when a risen spirit,

That finished victim of Life's manifold rack

## *On the Hills—Wordsworth-Land*

Stretched tranquil in the pang and thrill of death  
—Himself—surveys, and in new being large,  
Prophetic hovering o'er the ruined clay,  
Smiles o'er the pain its sleep annuls.

(3)

O Hills,

In Ye our human harmonies we trace :  
The vast melodious anguish, womb of peace ;  
Stern Pain beholding pain till issues thence  
The winged assurance of a solemn joy !  
Hail, Symbol of our Woe !—Strife whence emerge,  
And only thus, divinest glories !—Life,  
Battling to work through sullen faculties  
Man's consummation : craving copious blood  
But to flush rife the Future's hollow vein,  
And garnering tear of toil and sorrow's salt  
But to solicit by such constant sluice  
Slow soil to quicker root : Hail !—Thus He  
moves  
Still with each legion on the arduous road  
By cloud or flame ; and thus His realm He binds

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

With cords—nay, ne'er so frail—that He hath  
found

Deep in the supple heart-strings of our Woe !

### 4

Gird us with strength, O Hills : be Yours, be ours,  
Dispassioned passion's majesty—the stress,  
The peace. Yea, Hills, gapped, riven, strong in  
pain,

Fibred and fissured, folded, vexed ; like light,  
Broken to show its beauty ;—surely Ye,  
Nude nerve and vein, a tissued heart push forth  
To yield us back our own stilled throb and throe !

### 5

Succinct, Ye spread illimitably wise,  
Brief flank on flank to mist-diminished feet ;  
Sea-sandalled and full fathomless as seas ;—  
Fashioned with troubled features that start out  
Rich, salient in idea, like blind thought  
Caught in its molten tumult and transfixed  
To being by the subtle spear of shape.

*On the Hills—Wordsworth-Land*

Sprung 'neath the Ages' footsteps, Sphinxes, Ye,  
About whose lips light flutters fugitive !  
God's scrip in fragments, lie Ye: Your wan  
    heights,  
Reared o'er Your melancholy lakes, like Truth  
Grey o'er the tears of Time, high unison  
Attest eternal : one our God, and one  
This weak young god, our grained Humanity !

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

### II

#### (1)

Yet not unsolaced sit these Hills of God  
In mournful conclave, proffering prophesy,  
Intoning grief, by sad vicissitude.  
The old man's finger, shrivelled to its joint,  
Will wind about it some young girl's fair hair,  
Hiding the wreathing wrinkle, rigid node,  
With sheeny skeins from threads of tendrilled gold.  
So these crude crags intenerate their stone  
With silent graces : yield them to the dew  
With trembling ardours on their austere sides ;  
Paint each piled peak, harsh spire, and fretted  
point,  
Confederate with the rainbow ; or, 'twixt storms,  
Ethereally tender as wet lids  
Veiling the luminous moisture of deep eyes,  
Gleam, burnished by Day's evanescent fires :  
Or from the moon-fed bosom of the Night  
Refreshing lustre drink ; array their brows

## *On the Hills—Wordsworth-Land*

With gems and stars, all jewelled opulence  
Shook from the helpless fingers of the Dusk ;  
Or meet the Dawn with equal radiance,  
Lift undimmed foreheads from thick crowns of  
snow,

Of pearl, of porphyry, of crimson sleet  
That falls from mixing colours. I have seen  
Those thousand menial myrmidons of light,  
The servile hues, forsake their lord the Sun  
To wake the mountains ; in quick pageant, flame  
Dull contours forth, and ply their shifting loom  
Obviously there, to weave fit robe  
Of dappled broider and purpureal fold  
Over loud attributes of majesty  
For their new monarchs. Oft, from vacuous  
mist

Emerged, the Hills upgather in slow state  
Incomparable, save, perchance, to that  
When Earth herself, impulse divine diffused  
Within the universe's formful void,  
Cohering viewless parts like clouded breath,  
Sunsmit, indued her being's vital hues.

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

(2)

Nor lack God's soft affections : while swoll'n floods  
Rend their just confines or oppress the breast  
That bare them,—scarce deciduous, gentler  
streams,

Like wayward dewdrops, cling, and make a maze  
To shed more affluent moisture ; slow cascades  
Smoothly o'er scarred and perished precipice  
Slide down,—pellucid unguents, those hoar  
wounds

Anointing with choice salve : and fixed high,  
Like circling beacons steadfast o'er the seas,  
Exhaustless lustres pour, remit, subside,  
And leap again to sight from flashing streams.  
And at their feet recumbent, the cool lakes  
Lap whispered adulation, couching low.

(3)

Let these infect me,—stop dulled sense and soul  
Dusk-glamour of old Derwent ! Here the Hour  
Takes on a Presence, and all palpably

## *On the Hills—Wordsworth-Land*

With mist the vague Hills' foreheads steeps and  
swathes.

Some living spirit seals the liquid depths  
Inviolatè with the Hills ; then, ushering swift—  
A shadow moving through the closing air—  
Dusk's retinue and Twilight's peaceful train  
Into the Mountains' virgin chambers, broods  
Where Night bestrides the silence like a god :  
The querulous rook's plaint and the cry of sheep  
Uneasy on the mountains, mellowed come  
O'er mist and mead in measure musical ;  
And gathered voices, chastened into song,  
Float from far shores, and make sad monody  
As chanting out the great soul of the Day.



## *The Phoenix Lyre*

### III

#### (I)

But let these Hills be sombre ! Summer-sweets,—  
Thick light, gay song, stream's kiss, and blushing  
dews—

Lie sickly on them, cloying with their breath !  
Here Nature holds funereal court, attends  
With skies opaque, vales lustreless ; confirms  
With frequent visitation of harsh blast,  
Lightning and rocking thunder, rites occult !  
Then let the nodding, venerable Hills  
Rise brooding from the sad lakes' sable floor,  
Unwilling priests participant in woe ;  
And let the close-palled clouds, obscene with  
storm,  
Whisper their horrid birth with weeping rain,  
Travail and flee, trailing the broken mists  
Like frail abortions of their tainted birth !

*On the Hills—Wordsworth-Land*

(2)

Here let me brood till those vexed vapours writhe  
Pain of their thin-spun shapes and twisted toils  
Like serpent spires about me ;—drench me deep  
In that dun shroud and sea of dripping mist  
Muffling the mountains in its sodden swathe,  
Till horror gluts me, and I dream my way  
Through Death that sweetens on its self's excess  
To Life that lightens in the lap of Death ;  
And with red rays that vein like truant blood  
The cloud's lip-purple, feel Life's tale retold,—  
The rose-red wing that parts the pallid ash !

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

### IV

#### (1)

What though these things are human, pass away?—  
One moment with them holds all Time in leash.  
These streams have spoken, and the trees communed ;  
The inarticulate Hills giv'n to the heart  
The wisdom wedded to grey silences.  
Shall such thought die, voice vanish, whisper fail ?  
No ! Clouds shall nurse the stream-lore in their  
bosom,  
Fuse it again, fire-spiced, within the Earth ;  
Truth borne on winds shall keep hoar leaves'  
bequest ;  
And instinct of the tutelary Hills  
Spring out oracular from every clod !

## *Beethoven*

### *BEETHOVEN*

THE vision of a driven ship,—no maze  
Of moving spar, soft grace of clinging sail,—  
But bark of gaunt bare masts vexed Heavens assail  
In vain ; Truth's brow ; a mouth whose lips might  
raise

Rebellion huge as Satan's ; eyes whose blaze,  
Cowing the assembled gods, hath seemed to leap  
Heaven's heights to levy Music, and would keep  
Sound chained to Earth for ever with a gaze :  
Thy face. Thou god ! In thee, my soul, I swear,  
Thrilling, compact, capacious as a star  
Whose tissues, eager as the sun is far  
That feeds them, suddenly swollen, feel the air  
Light's goblet—God hath drunk ; to glut and lees  
Drained Heaven, Earth's unaccomplished destinies.

# *The Phoenix Lyre*

## *ODE TO MUSIC*

### I

**G**OD'S music lies about us breathed unheard,  
Floats in the ether, to our flesh doth cling,  
As undivined

And imagelessly shed

As muted strains from Heaven issuing  
That speed a soul, dilate on dewy wing  
To some fresh-born babe's heart-nest newly led ;

Tones as sweet

As that dim chant whereby the siren waves  
With soft white foam-arms and the tide's hushed  
beat

Wean shores into the bosom of their caves,

Move with each fleeting wind ;

Melodious effluence from bough and bird,  
June in the air and lutions of its leaf,

## *Ode to Music*

Weave choicest harmony,  
Meshing the limbs of thought in threads of sound ;  
And Earth, from core to rind  
Faint with hid music like a maiden stirred  
With love's new wine, unlooses 'neath the ground  
Fond pain and fragrant grief  
To slow song in her seasons' melody.  
But more than poet's wand  
From Earth charms to our ears,  
Sprites' song, or music of thick-folded spheres,  
Beats from a human heart-beat's tunings quick  
from resonant voice or hand !

## II

Give but a note, a strain,  
Hand-chord or heart-refrain,  
And Life is known and rendered back to God.  
The body's blood  
Ebbs from the soul with long, relieving pain,  
As from some dew-soft balmy wound  
Gored in the sudden entrance of delight ;  
And lone, the meagre spirit, stark and white,

## *The Phœnix Lyre*

Wanders emancipate within the light  
Of God's profound.

### III

Thou hast a power,  
O Human Music, soothing like the sea,  
To ease the body of its too great soul ;  
With plaint and plea  
Wilt help the pain and passion of the heart ;  
Or with thy thunder-roll  
Wakest the spirit in its obscure dower !  
Roused at thy simplest theme or chance caress,  
Haloed with grandeur of his toil and stress,  
Man doth start  
Behind Life's blemish and its blurred impress  
A visible prophet of eternity !

### IV

Youth and maid  
At thy behest,  
Steeped in wild ardours of a dream unguessed,  
And wrought with ecstasy to odorous pains

## *Ode to Music*

That melt again in joy heart scarce contains,  
All unafraid  
Play lightly with Life's veiled Eternity,  
And quench love's thirsting at Death's very veins !  
Nor need they shrink :  
Thou, Music, dost smile on them when they see  
Life but a huge blown rose distilling sweets whose  
dews they drink !

### V

What though the vision fleet ?  
Through thee they learn  
In after-life to yearn  
For that completed form of bliss whose sweet  
Sad face divine  
Is seen within the misty shroud of tears.  
Ah, Music ! ever it is thine  
To touch the perfect pathos of our kind :  
That ever thy least tone  
For Age renews the picture that is gone,  
For Youth plucks some remote dew-tender bloom  
Upon the tomb,



## *The Phoenix Lyre*

—Quickens the halting tenour of Man's mind  
So that he hears  
The phoenix, o'er dear ashes of his years,  
Beating eternal wing within the living urn !

### VI

Nathless be mine the sterner strain  
When almost unto death  
God's viewless finger snaps the mortal chain ;  
Thus when the spirit, bare,  
Leaping through eager face and kindling frame  
Quivers out on the brow like flame ;  
And oft the soul, a mere frail string drawn tense,  
Stands vibrant from the body's harp and thrall  
To every spirit-hand that throngs the air,  
Till, struck and re-struck through life's delicate  
sheath,  
Perception, shrinking, slacks, and sense,  
With gradual fall,  
Swoons satiate in a heady luxury of death.

*Victoria—1901*

*VICTORIA—1901*

THE flood that God through vaulted Time  
doth guide

Flows ever echoing Ages in the grave :

In kings and nations loudly sounds the wave

Urging the flagging impulse of the tide.

Then weep not vainly, Earth !—Ne'er shall subside

The far-resounding swell her being gave,

Till onward surge of Man outroll the cave

And with the brooding ultimate abide.

All fruit she bore that God had in her sown.

A nation's heart beat blood within her own.

She draped an era with a virgin stole.

O mourn ! but, too, be strong in her to see,

In life, and death, and consummating whole,

The features of the god Humanity !

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

### *SELF*

OFTTIMES an inner consciousness of soul  
Slips from the subtle sense-sheath, and  
thence views,

As pale the wraith its mortal path pursues,  
The shadowy semblance of Self's spectral whole.  
See! on it moves, some unknown being's shroud!  
A trailing impulse shrinking from its mark;  
Blind in a world ablaze yet wholly dark;  
One of a throng, lone as a night's one cloud.

Back creeps the soul to thrall. Thought, like a  
worm

'Neath flesh-foul mould, stirs a distempered form  
Through woe that at the heart of things doth  
dwell,

And laps the horrid blood that beats within.  
Last, God's beam smites 'thwart blank reception's  
cell,

From molten shadows rarer light to win.

*In a Churchyard*

*IN A CHURCHYARD*

I

'MID these white clustered tombs, as oft  
before,

I stand to muse. 'Neath that old tree, whose  
boughs,

Strands of a streaming lash, wield wounding knots

Of red ripped buds upon the wind that spots

Thus with his cold thin blood the Season's brows

Till Summer's softer rising evermore

In gold bloom bury him,—sleeps one I bore

Low to his youth's last sleep. Dusk drifts  
and dreams.

Comes forth the unsullied spirit, with whose eye

I scan Earth's naked sorrows. The grey Day

Gone mournful from his consort left to rest

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

Lone in vast grief, from out the closing West  
Looks back with one brief bright repining ray  
Through fading eyelids red with tears. A sigh  
Moves with the wind, as Earth had fall'n to die  
Back to her uncompanioned pain and couch.

Mute, naked of myself, purged as with death  
In this pure precinct, Friend, I come to you,  
Ye Dead, and silent Nature, hither led  
By equal sorrow. Speak ! a sad heart fed  
With life, seeks alms of death ! Speak ! and indue  
Symbol and sign of sooth. Glimmer beneath  
The grave's thick veil, death's guerdon. What  
rare breath

Courses life's core, O Nature, for thy pang ?

The cold wind answers : to Hope's inmost seat  
It presses like the echo of loud Death :  
The shed flowers answer : rent and sullied lie  
The rubied blooms which lately, like a sigh  
Earth's burning languors loosed, laid trembling  
breath

## *In a Churchyard*

In flame along her breast, and those moist feet  
Flecked with pure fire that seemed it could not die  
Save self-consumed in passion without stain.

Loud Death is everywhere : his wingéd powers  
Flew past the timorous crocus-band that stoop  
Their fair frail mitred fronts and bow their tiers  
Of soft-barbed petals to his windy spears,  
Spring's fruitless van : the tall clouds fade and droop  
On cloven stems of Day,—slough off like flowers  
A blighted bloom of light. Earth's pleasant  
bowers

Have withered from a viewless stalk of woe.

Pining, the Earth breathes low : across her fly  
Swift shadows that possess the slackening cheeks  
And wreath the stretched peaked body. Still she  
sinks

To Death, that still encroaching where she shrinks,  
O'er turf and field's grey covert, as in creeks  
Waves creep and well, floats with slow arms. The  
sky,

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

The worn prone land (as their pale prisoners die)  
Stiffen with sudden cold, sigh, and lie still.

As on the white where last Life's ebbing blood  
Flung faint red foam, creeps in a sable blue  
Chill with decay, so o'er the far pale plain,  
That white bare road, these stones, a blur of pain  
Bloodlessly paints and numbs, as 'twere a hue  
Bled out of Hope grown cold. A mist and flood  
Of horror, lapping o'er the limp sick sod,  
Livid, engulfs me.—Death, is this thy all?

The cold wind answers : like a finger laid  
To press a cleaving seal of silent Death  
Through riven folds of flesh and heart of clay,  
To the deep soul it goes : a voiceless 'Yea'  
Falls from a lifted flower of yon white wreath  
Starring the youth's sleep's gloom : 'So are ye  
made,  
Ashes to ash and dust to dust is laid.  
The mould hath made thee : to the mould  
return.'

## *In a Churchyard*

### II

So, Death, is't thus, whom I esteemed Life's  
Spouse

Sowing a purer seed in seed defiled ?  
Vain, then, the hoarded nutriment of men  
To feed a sweeter vein for Life again  
In thy dark loin ?—nay, vain the red food piled  
Hissing upon thy hearth, through thy broad  
house

A fragrance full enough to spread might rouse  
A kind satiety within thy soul ?

Vain our faint soul of Hope ! Vain in thy sight  
The bare bled oval of a human heart  
To deck the jewelled strings I deemed were hung  
From Heaven to Earth, like those whereon are  
swung,

Unseen, the beaded stars ? Vain this our part  
Of forlorn valour wrought for seeming right,  
Heroic toil in gloom, striving for light,

Love, pity, brotherhood, and tearful faith ?



## *The Phoenix Lyre*

Vain, vain our yearnings : none shall wean  
The troubled offspring of the weeping bride  
The soul hath of the body ! Vain the tear  
Soft in my brother's eye, and vain the fear  
Fragrant on love that fails ? Last, vain He died  
From whose dim sacred shoulders through  
    stretched sheen  
Descends a kindlier cross ?

‘Yes, vain I ween,

All ! ’

God, I thank Thee : ’twas myself who  
    spake !

## *In a Churchyard*

### III

For, lo ! upon the land, within my heart,  
Is sudden joy ! From the deep core of Night  
Leaks light—Death's loosening soul ! Like him  
on whom

Far sunk in Sleep's gross-caverned mist and gloom,  
Dawn's mighty waves have broken and flung light  
Thick to his eyes like purging brine, I start,  
Suddenly wondering, while the soul, alert,  
—Prepared its many chambers of sweet sense—

Takes in the homing joy. Upon the land,  
Within her inmost mould, grey grain and flake,  
Thrilled through her emerald herb's soft silken plaid  
Like shining odours, and in new light laid  
Upon each outer clot and fibre, wake  
Life's pledged delight and power. As weeds, that  
stand

Acrid, unwet, upon a barren strand  
—The tide withheld that salves their subject  
pain—

## *The Phœnix Lyre*

Touched with the moistening spice of flying  
spume

Old Ocean shakes afar,—thrill, then, aglow,  
Plunged drenched in moving deeps and fountained  
foam,

Steeped to their last sapped fibre in the home  
Of those returning waters, flow on flow,  
Dip dreaming down in bliss, nor care to know  
Love's Why and Whence;—so I, in this spread  
tomb

Of clod and air and sky dissolved like ice

To bright lit moving dewes of life, quaff, quaff,  
And drain the cloud-cupped ether, nor would  
know

Why thus the sky is laid with nectared air  
A bowl unto my lips. O Death, the Fair,  
Suffice this, then, thine answer—‘ Out of Woe,  
Sick with the passing pang of rended chaff,  
Rounds slow the jewelled grain. Ah! Life shall  
laugh,

In wiser times, with Death—twin husbandmen

## *In a Churchyard*

In these brief fields of God !'

So falls the Truth,  
Fresh from whose font the wet untainted stars,  
Like flashes on the wistful eyes of Night,  
Sealing Death's tale, burn buoyant. Vast delight,  
A peace no pang of reminiscence mars,  
Pervades me ; pluméd Hope, as large as Youth,  
As passionate, but sweet with purer light,  
Possesses me unto its proudest ends.

Silent I stand, incurious, glad with pain  
Aching on joy. High up, as if the dam  
That held the silver sound-floods of the South  
Broke to his beak and fed his silken mouth  
With the year's trickling music till it swam  
All rife about,—remote,—a bird's pure strain  
Purls pausingly. Beneath me, where the rain  
Hath run in reedy channels to his choice,

Through the warm soft-pored clod, come  
whisperings,

Sound of sweet breathings, syllables I deem,

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

Intense from those white lips whence late oozed  
froth

Spun out from Death. From many a flowery  
growth

Blown unperceived in gloom, springs fire. A  
gleam,

An amber cadence midst faint colourings

Mixing like song, glows westward. Lo ! all things  
Are lips for Death to make a lay of Life !

I wake again : still from the darkling East  
The Wind feels with numbed fingers for a prey.

But now I kiss them : stinglessly they pass,

Their pressure but a prophesy, alas !

Erst so ill-read ! I see the white-limbed May

Rise from her couch of tears, and o'er the grass

Spread out her perfumed cloth for the Year's feast

Of meat of fruit and flower, and fragrant wine

Of Summer's bursten veins. The veil is rent

That swathed the Earth round in her pillowed pain

From eyes of Light. And now, dim on mine ears,

### *In a Churchyard*

That holiest music of the harpéd spheres,  
The deep unwitting pathos of the strain  
Of quiring children, from yon grey Church sent,  
Steals like a vesper slipped from Heaven, lent  
    To vouch for verity in the voice of Death.

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

### IV

Complete with peace reclaimed from fruitful  
doubt,

Homeward I bend slow steps. Against the sky,  
A pensive web, a fairy filigree  
Of casual twigs twined, that an aged tree  
Has pleased his oldest fancy, fearfully,  
With failing sap, still greenly to trace out  
Upon the air's blue void, calls to mine eye  
Tears for the tender traits of Life in all.

O worn old tree ! still in thy faded core  
To trace the semblance of thy maker's love !  
I hail the sign, O God : Death's parting word—  
' A haft of gems upon the keen sure sword  
Bladed with secret love I bear.' Above,  
Below, from bending Heav'n, the bowed Earth  
o'er,  
A burden—Beauty, Beauty, evermore—  
Resounds like song about the breath of  
Being !

## *In a Churchyard*

For beauty is upon the tongue of Life  
And in the eyes of Death. Each common day  
Dies in the sadness of a new regret  
For grace so spacious and so exquisite  
Passed unpossessed.—Hues of Thy steadfast ray  
Of love, O God !—The form Thou mad'st to wife  
Of virgin Good !—The carven Vase that Life  
Fills fleetingly, else viewless to our veil !

SHELDON CHURCHYARD,  
1902.



## *The Phoenix Lyre*

### *A FABLE OF PARADISE*

I DREAMED I stepped in Paradise  
With angels at my side ;  
It yet was night and all the skies  
Were shadowy and wide.

Set like a lantern to illumine  
The Heavens from afar,  
Broke softly through gold-cloven gloom  
A bright and wondrous star.

Its rays were moon-white rippled red  
And haunting fair its frame,  
Its light was like a passion shed  
And Pathos was its name.

## *A Fable of Paradise*

And all the angels watched to see  
    Its glory mount and grow ;  
They gathered in its purity,  
    They watched it come and go.

Behind me when the star was gone  
    Another wonder grew ;  
Coiling 'twixt clouds, an azure zone  
    Wreathed Dawn out, hue on hue.

It draped the dusk in diamond light  
    With tint and facet fire ;  
Laid opal in the air, till Night  
    Died on a jewelled pyre.

Then, day-girt, swelled a sphere's shape, till  
    The Heavens were stormed with sheen ;  
The angels gathered reverent-still  
    And praised the glory seen.

Then asked I marvelling, ' Angels, whence  
    Orbs of such wondrous worth ? '  
They answered pitying, ' That, intense,  
    Thy Sun, the star thy Earth ! '

## *The Phœnix Lyre*

### *NATURE'S CONVERT*

NATURE, thy least frail cloud that drinks  
light's hues

Glow, as it dies, with some pure inner heart

Yet unimagined of the soul of Art ;

Thy snows and sunsmit waters, morning dews,

The silent largess that the Frost-god strews,

Stray beams and sudden splendours that surprise

Like answers to lost thoughts, give to mine eyes

Riches Time's breath of tarnish but renews.

Unheir me, then, for ever, if I fail

In due regard of thy sufficiency,

Or cast a hope of wealth beyond thy pale.

Be mine the dower o' the young Spring Sun when  
he

Shall coax Earth's bud-blush through thick verdure-  
veil,

Set silver on her pores of stream and sea.

## *Hymn of Praise*

### *HYMN OF PRAISE*

#### I.—DAWN

DEAR GOD, now, while this Dawn is the  
child of mine eye,

Pale and yearning like Youth, prone at Day's pallid  
stair,

And white gold in frail tendrils of cloud—trembling  
hair

Flecking throat of the suppliant—burns till the sky  
Shimmers, yields to the flame, shudders, bows him  
to die ;

While the Sun, couched supine in fair Night's  
languid lair,

Lifts an arm, head-recumbent, then springs, haggard-  
faced,

To his steeds, melts the stars, presses worlds to  
wild dews

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

That make wine of the air in a chalice of hues  
For his lips,—flings the Earth heady lees, at whose  
taste

She awakes, quenched of languor, is thrilled and  
embraced,

Pulse from pulse of her sumptuous consort renews ;  
As I rise from the mist and the swift dredge of sleep,  
Where I groped, where I lapsed (on a soft sieve of  
pain

Liquid sinew of soul flesh eluding, like rain  
Round a root, and as sinuous) wound to the deep  
Below Being, and lapped where its moist entrails  
creep,

Reaching vague sheeted films to the voids, blind  
and vain :

As I step from sheer steeps where I strove till I  
found

Time's enfranchisement—Time ! fumbling midwife,  
who, loath,

From the past pulling forth, demurs still to clothe  
The nude soul in the light of its power, set it  
gowned

## *Hymn of Praise*

At the throne of its jubilant destiny, crowned  
With the hope of the strife and the slough of the  
sloth ;

Found quick paths in large utterance, motion in  
thought,

Leapt pinnaced pinnacles dim Past had piled,  
Scaled peak upon peak the glad Future filed  
To my impotent stature, nor guerdonless sought  
Friends, sprites, souls familiar, whose forms recon-  
ciled

Doubts, visions, and seemings in Day's pauses  
caught :

As I step unabashed from Thy presence, O  
God,

From the clouds to the meaningless void of the  
Day,

I would praise Thee, O God ! and no less for the  
pledge

Than this diffident Present, this faltering Day,  
Alien child of mine eye : for unquenchable joy  
Is shut in mine heart with the bolt of the Day !

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

### II.—WINTER

As I brood with the Sage of the Snows,—wrinkled  
seer

Prolific of boon 'neath the harsh sabled pall  
Of his wizardry; mark, how his wand, in the  
Hall

Of the hesitant Seasons, bids Nature appear  
In the nude aboriginal soul of her, sheer,  
Undeterred, virgin-stark, till 'twixt tears, casting  
thrall

Of a verdurous leprosy, body and soul  
Look forth in their vestureless might unashamed—  
Shredded twig, limb with leaf, shrunken stock mute  
and maimed,

And below, the red earth in slack throes, and the  
roll

Of the long barren ridge,—all the land, aching bole  
On the grey balmy side of the Seas yet untamed :  
How 'neath snows through the land in her sleep  
and her swoon,

His kind alchemy softens and mixes anew

## *Hymn of Praise*

Chastened seed and cleansed lees to strange ends,  
hid from view,

But charged with delight for the maid ; or commune  
With the maiden herself, in deep night, while the  
moon

Is lost in blank skies with spent stars, when I sue  
With the winds, shadowed limbless fleet giants that  
scour

O'er her face, through her trees, making mutter  
and moan

Of their great ineffectual love ; or, alone,  
Image unisons human of key in red lour  
Of stained sun, tinted leaf, purpling vale, the bare  
tower

Of the Church, whence the sound of Christ's bells,  
faintly thrown

On the wind, peals and falls ; while Thine hand—  
thus it seems—

Which hath plucked in the deep growing night, like  
a brand,

Earth from fires fervent Phœbus avowed,—Thine  
own hand—



## *The Phoenix Lyre*

Purges visibly now the sweet clot of her dreams,  
Pushing spikes of pure frost to the last sores and  
seams

Of soiled flesh, and its wounds with iced thread  
and fine band

Of wisped snows softly filleting o'er, till she stand  
Girt with chastity, whole, on the pedestalled past  
For new venture and gain : I would praise Thee  
O God,

For the token and deed ! for, no less than the  
bland

Lisping-syllabled June, is the tongue of the blast  
Fraught with love, love and joy, and a holy delight !

## *Hymn of Praise*

### III.—SPRING AND SUMMER

As I enter the Dawn with delight of a god,  
Ruddy, ample of ether, slow, regal, benign ;  
'Midst heaped dews in wide swards glassed like ice,  
dews that line

Glist'ring blade, the massed stubble, drenched tree,  
steaming sod,

With a bright jewelled nap, thick, occult from the  
clod :

Feel its keen gelid breath—virile, ray-like and fine,  
Quintessentially pure,—pregnant equable ray,  
Poignant, potent of odour,—press sense like a bone  
Loosed from fragrant ethereal flesh of a zone  
Of gods, angels, dissolved and diffused in strong  
sway

Of our limp nether air : as I watch through the  
day

While the rose of its splendour,—bud, blossom, is  
blown ;

While the cave of the sky, as the bed of the sea

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

With its waves washed and whelmed, is suffused  
with quick hues  
That but ebb upon hues; while the Earth, plain  
and lea,  
Sullied ways of the sullenest Cities that be  
In the trail of her toil, with her flushed breasts that  
fuse  
Blood to ichor, and wealth of her free maiden  
thews,  
Fluid silver of streams and her oceans,—indues  
Her inviolate glory, bosom and bower  
Of hid treasures about her,—lies tranced in her  
power  
Like a beautiful phantasy,—dreams that she rues  
Her own infinite sweetness, and glory renews  
In gold mist and rosed tear for the rape of each  
hour  
Of her passage, unhonoured, untasted of eyes  
Of blind men: while the bent purpled Dusk, from  
piled ore  
Of red cloud, glowing vapour, gold, shimmering  
gore

## *Hymn of Praise*

Of the sacrificed Sun in the crucibled skies,  
Over fires of the West, strains gemmed light in  
sweet guise

Of the Moon and her diademed maids, in a core  
Of thin effluence, new, unalloyed : while I lean  
To the stars and am filled, while I peer through  
the night

And am suddenly whelmed with the love and the  
light

That was with me, but first in the dusk-shadows  
seen,

I would praise Thee, O God ! for unquenchable joy  
Is set in my soul with the seal of the night !

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

### IV.—AUTUMN

Praise to Thee in the Season of Death! Let the  
line

Laying laud on my page spurt with passion and  
pain

Of the pang of the Earth now, that, spread like a  
bane,

Haunts her, bowel and bone of bright body supine,  
More vast than the woe of wrecked love.—Why  
repine?—

Come! Ye Sons of the Dust! shout with joy, shout  
again!

As ye sang when the Stars leapt the womb!—As I  
mourn

With the woe that has bled from the trees through  
red frail

Dewy membranous breasts of the leaves and each  
pale

Pore and pulse of smit bark curled and coiled in  
the scorn

## *Hymn of Praise*

Of steeled skies and cold Dawns and beam's probe  
of suns shorn

To raw flame ruthless-rayed to repel ; as the trail  
Of bruised stubble and stalk I pursue while soft air,  
Like the wraiths of their corn or their flowers, at  
my feet,

Creeps and clothes them with God ; where the  
fields, still and sweet

As though Music had lodged at their breasts, and,  
scarce 'ware,

Stilled and died to their heart, far prolong, bleak  
and bare,

Their dun harmony, sinking at last till they meet  
The ineffable, sad, sabled skies ; as I roam

Where the leaves drop like hours from the numbed  
hand of Time,

Where the mists and mad winds, weeping mourners  
from home

Of the corpse, drift and pass ; as I gaze at the  
dome

Of bronze skies, verge to verge crusted o'er with  
thick rime

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

Of dead hues,—or all naked, like flesh of a clime  
Of foul Heavens, whence dim on a nether lead  
limb

Oozes blood with the ruddy disc'd sun, a slow gout  
Stanch'd with Noon ;—as I drink the bright rains,  
wines that flout

My stretch'd lips ; as I peer through the rains, o'er  
the rim

Of their quick limpid lattice, crossed, bent to the  
whim

Of my lover the Wind : as I bathe in the rout

With the tremulous Earth : I would praise Thee, O  
God !

Here at last is the fulness of joy !—crown of thorns,  
Brimming nectar of tears ! and the good god of  
Life

On the altar of Death ! I would praise Thee, O  
God !

For the symbol and sign : for unquenchable joy  
Thou hast set in my soul and confirmed,—sealed  
with Death !

## *Autumn Songs*

### *AUTUMN SONGS*

#### I.—THE ADVENT OF AUTUMN

**O**NCE more the swift hours of the year advance  
And gather like a clustering fruit, scarce held  
On the sustaining past ;  
Once more we pause to give a wondering glance  
At those brief boughs of Time already felled  
And far behind us cast.

And what shall now thy welcome be, O Time  
Of mists that wreath with tears the happy fruit ?  
Shall we repine, or sing  
Occulter glory?—weep June's ruddy prime  
Spent like yon sun, or laud on rarer lute  
That nameless dearer thing,



## *The Phoenix Lyre*

Thy bosom's bliss-blent bane? Hail! — Why  
lament?

Thou garnerest all the gain of Summer gone,  
And in sad secret ways  
Of motherhood,—mute, woe-wrought, ruin-rent,—  
Magnificence maturest all alone  
For progeny of days.

And thick about thee are the holier hours  
Of meditation ; in the joy of life  
A sweeter thought for death.  
And from thy passage, like the scent of flowers  
A fragrance wanders wafted through the strife  
With promise in its breath !

## *Autumn Songs*

### II.—THE PASSAGE OF AUTUMN

Ah ! deep in the night  
From field and from brake  
Comes the breath of his might  
Like the shadows that shake

Through the light. Listen, there,  
Where the mist and the gloom  
Thickest lie, is his lair :  
He is making a tomb

For the months ! Ah, again,  
Hear the sound of his toil  
With the winds and the rain  
He is making a spoil

Of the days ! In the gold  
And the full floating joy  
Of the Sun not yet cold  
He is making alloy

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

Of pale grief! Ah! behold!

In the midst of the light,

In the heart of the fold,

Like a storm, like a blight,

He is working the woe,

The ruin and grief

Of the year! See it flow

In the air,—through each leaf

Turn! and taint! Ah! at last,

He has turned, he has done!

He has plundered and passed,

He is gone, he is gone!

He is gone! But, alas!

Wherever he trod,

'Twixt the trees, 'thwart the grass,

Seamed and sunk in the sod

Is the trace of his bane.

And sorrow and death

And darkness and pain

Are the stain of his breath!

## *City Songs*

### *CITY SONGS*

#### I.—THE PLEA

**S**AITH the Mother of Man and his Might :  
‘I laugh at your Cities and spoil.

Ye have wrought them, not in the light,  
But deep in the darkness of night,

With a pitiless toil  
Of Evil affronting the Right.

‘But Evil shall perish : the days

Breed horror 'neath Autumn's feet,  
Blood and blight ; but the pure perfect ways  
Of the years are unturned, and the rays

Of sure suns, strong and sweet,  
Whelm the evil to nourish new days !

## *The Phœnix Lyre*

‘So your Cities shall die : like the wrack  
Consumed in the coming of Spring,  
Shall crumble and pass, and their towers  
Lie numbed in the sod till the hours  
Obscure Futures bring  
Mix their ruin and dust to new powers !’

‘Shall this be, gracious Mother of Men?  
At thy word, let it be ; but I ween  
There is yet in these Cities of Wrong  
Spacious sadness worthy of Song—  
In the maimed soul and mien,  
In the quivering bosom and tongue,

‘Pealing pathos, O Mother of Men !  
Dream we?—Dim in the sin and the strife  
God’s dowries, as deep and as wide  
As the passionless exquisite pride  
And the still, lustrous life  
Of Purity, throng and abide !’

## *City Songs*

### II.—CITY FACES

Oft—as on City street-tides borne along,  
We feel our kindred being's under-sway—  
A sudden wave beats hard, then ebbs away,  
Drawing the soul out deep into the throng.  
So many dead attest the waters' wrong,  
And ghastly shapes, wave-worsted ere the Day,  
Float blindly, weeds and surf, almost we say :  
' A song of Death, O God, this Thy Life-Song ? '

As though a grain of the unnumbered sand  
Should wail the darkness of the sifter's hand,  
We cry : yet mark how ev'n the beaded grain  
Is exquisitely wrought, intense with life :  
Most potent, then, the face of human pain,  
And stern the pulsing of its heart of strife.

## *The Phœnix Lyre*

### III.—LACHRYMÆ MUSARUM!

(1)

Around the silent form of Poesy,  
Behold, our doctors stand : invoking air  
For promise of the prophet,—note of strings  
Took from the heart of Death on muted shell,  
Voice with the fleet winds fugitive, foot's fall  
Cloud-feathered, fluttering far in Phantasy—  
Of that physician who shall touch to life  
The pale recumbent figure. Many cry  
'There is no health in her,'—nay, deem her dead,  
And curse unnatural times that choked her breath.  
Because the quickened workings of our Age  
Have joined their iron threads to nature's woof,  
Men deem the dubious veil a finished shroud  
Wherein sad Poesy lies ensepulchred !

(2)

Bear with our blindness, God ! Doth not the Sun  
Heave his broad orb with endless day and night ?

## *City Songs*

Are there not clouds, moons, mists, and quiet  
stones,

And priest-like trees whose Delphic branch and  
leaf

Still gesture forth unutterable thought?

God ! who can quench a star ! Doth not the Dusk

Brood like a god dilate o'er every place,

And Spring still scatter incense from his lips

To every wind ? Doth not a strain, a tone,

Cast out the soul new-fledged to wing its way

Through Thine own loftiest ether unappalled ?

The bright brief beauty of a maiden's face,

A human lineament, epitomise

The whole world's treasure, beauty, conscious  
being ?

O for a wand to conjure from the mire,

And shower before each dull bewildered eye,

The jewels trembling unrefined within !

A hand to pluck the basest weed that grows

And sound the music of its tingling sap

In every hole and corner of the Earth !



## *The Phoenix Lyre*

### IV.—AFTER THE RAIN

(1)

Colour and light upon the face of Night  
After a blind day's gloom !  
Fragrance and freshness where there lay a blight  
Of faded bloom !

There where the Sun went sullen down the West  
A hectic heart of hues,  
Whose bright burst blood goes racing from ripped  
breast  
To fire the dews !

And all about the sky a changing flush  
And teem of tinted tide  
Of molten mountained cloud, whence Dusk's quick  
brush  
Paints out his pride !

## *City Songs*

(2)

Domed on the radiant border of the land,  
Pale o'er the burdened plain,  
Pure and regenerate the Cities stand  
Cleansed in the rain !

Then, filmed like dream-framed worlds or visioned  
souls,  
Plumed mists in purple train  
Twist fragrant on impalpable soft poles  
Rapt with faint pain !

All this the wonder of the rain's swift rod :  
As if some lurking Pan  
Had sudden raised new empires from the sod  
For love of Man !

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

### *NIAGARA*

(1)

**A**BOVE, beneath,  
Afar, one breath  
With the split spume and smitten rock's numbed  
rage,  
Displayed the same :  
An element,  
An ocean, rent  
And hung a tattered pennant on grey spears !  
Or 'tis a page  
That Nature from herself doth disengage,  
All prodigal to proclaim  
The mystery of her dim primeval years !

(2)

Ah, Nature ! still the old barbaric grace :  
Breathing with bated breeze that yearns to wean  
Bare boughs to budded green,

## *Niagara*

The bruised reed binds,  
Or with thy brookless winds  
Confounding Space !  
As thus with laughter, like a youthful queen  
From flowing form and light blithe restless face  
Rippling her maiden glee 'midst senators  
Grey-haired in sober conclave met, thy race  
Of open waters, glimmering, leaping, pours  
Deep down those steeps,  
Stops, sways, then with new rainbow-mirthful mien,  
And gathering snowy skirts and trailing spray,  
Mocks o'er her fall, then soars  
Up-swerving supple-stemmed, glides, onward sweeps  
Ruffling the staid bowed rocks and will not pay  
Meet homage those grey heights—Dost tremble?  
—Nay!—

The hurrying stream is perfect as the sky,  
As surely formal as the frozen hills,  
To emulate the prowess that fulfils  
The motions of thy hidden harmony !  
No step, no note,  
No fleck afloat,

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

Of that untutored footing, laughter, spray  
Flung farthest in the foamy garment's sweep,  
Mars that melodious ordinance of the way  
The fall of seas, like chorded steps of gods,  
The flit of rain the wind with music shods,  
Together keep !

Lo !

Like a cadenced, slow

Unbroken strain of music, come and go

The plunging waters. Nature !—Whence?—Wilt  
say ?

This soul that laps us in its to and fro ?

The ebb, the flow,

Bloom bred to fade away,

Clouds, herbs, and rocking trees—the Night, the  
Day ?

(3)

Wouldst thou desire

A human, happier wisdom to endear

Now with this pageant?—Never fear !

Those cowed and shrouded mists that from the  
gyre

## *Niagara*

Of the chafed cataract writhe, and in a drear  
Interminable-resurrection, rise  
As often as the ruined torrent dies,  
And drift in pale procession, touch the lyre  
Of genial Death for us, and sound again  
The sad, ineffable, glad prophecies  
Which round the rim of gloom and our heart's  
    pain,

Like tremblings of that reminiscent light  
Fringing the Heavens of June the livelong night,  
Linger, and will not go.

And ever those soft rainbows, leaning low,  
That kiss the humid rock, or melt their bow  
And shiver to a thousand tintured tears  
With sorrow for the wounded waters, flow,  
And shall perpetual flow through all the years,  
Into our minds, memorial types and peers  
Of those imperishable powers to bless,  
Which, constant as the hues, would we confess,  
The sun sends ever on the airy throe  
Light feels with living, glow within Life's stress,  
And pain, and tears, contingent with its fears.

## *The Phoenix Lyre*

(4)

Attendant on the cataract's glory, caught  
Like an elusive reflex that the elf  
Of light imprints to turn upon himself  
And quench, abode  
And, vanishing, abode again, a thought.  
Far in the meagre islands whence I sought  
Niagara ; in one worn niche, beside a road  
Midmost of cloistered England : where a god  
From loins of Mammon long had swayed a mace  
Of Death in crabbéd temples ; in a place  
Sick with the dim charred altars claiming toll  
Of incense from fumed flesh and the sered soul  
Of Earth's archangel Beauty ; where the face  
Of Nature is withdrawn, and all the land,  
Void of her fruitful fabrics to the brand  
Such worship wields, and cumbered o'er  
With ashes that renew their bloodless store  
Like a shed moon, groans, shakes, and at each  
pore  
Exudes an acrid dew, or flailed by fell

## *Niagara*

Death-lurid fires, heaves on a molten floor  
Like some prone sombre minister of Hell  
Seeking forbidden slumber, her huge girth  
Flame-chained ; where even the proud Sun, whose  
    birth,

Spotting this polished censer of the Earth  
With sparkles from a thousand gleaming suns  
Glad images of himself, makes genial mirth  
O'er half her globe, fails in the pleasing task  
Of that bright propagation—shrinking shuns  
His own pure functions, his just majesty  
Waives, unregarded in an alien sky  
Black toil of restless vapours leagued to mask  
Their shuddering prey ; where, deep in tainted  
    gloom,

A race's unillumined issue strives  
To bury God within the ghastly tomb  
Earth's shining angels yield, thralls under gyves  
Of their perverted uses : in such place  
Pain's unremitting lips make resonant  
With echo of the dread rite's ceaseless chant  
Flung from such sepulchre, and 'neath that sky



## *The Phoenix Lyre*

The Sun forbears to father : I had dreamed,  
Despite the strenuous tongue of Misery,  
God's music fell in floods : sometimes it seemed  
Apparent like the beauties of a face ;  
Heard like the soul unto herself is, freed  
By visionary senses : or I deemed  
It came and went like snow within the night,  
A moment clothing that sad bosom white :  
But whether thus, by inner senses read,  
God lived, or by green sweetness of a weed  
Virile and pure upon a loathsome bed,  
Or traced in nobler characters, decreed  
By marshalling of the immemorial might  
Of stars no clime's inglorious skies impair,  
God was made manifest, and from Him shed  
That effluence which is music, thunder-pealed  
Heav'n-high, or sighed of waving herbage-hair  
The Wind smoothes with hushed fingers in the  
field :

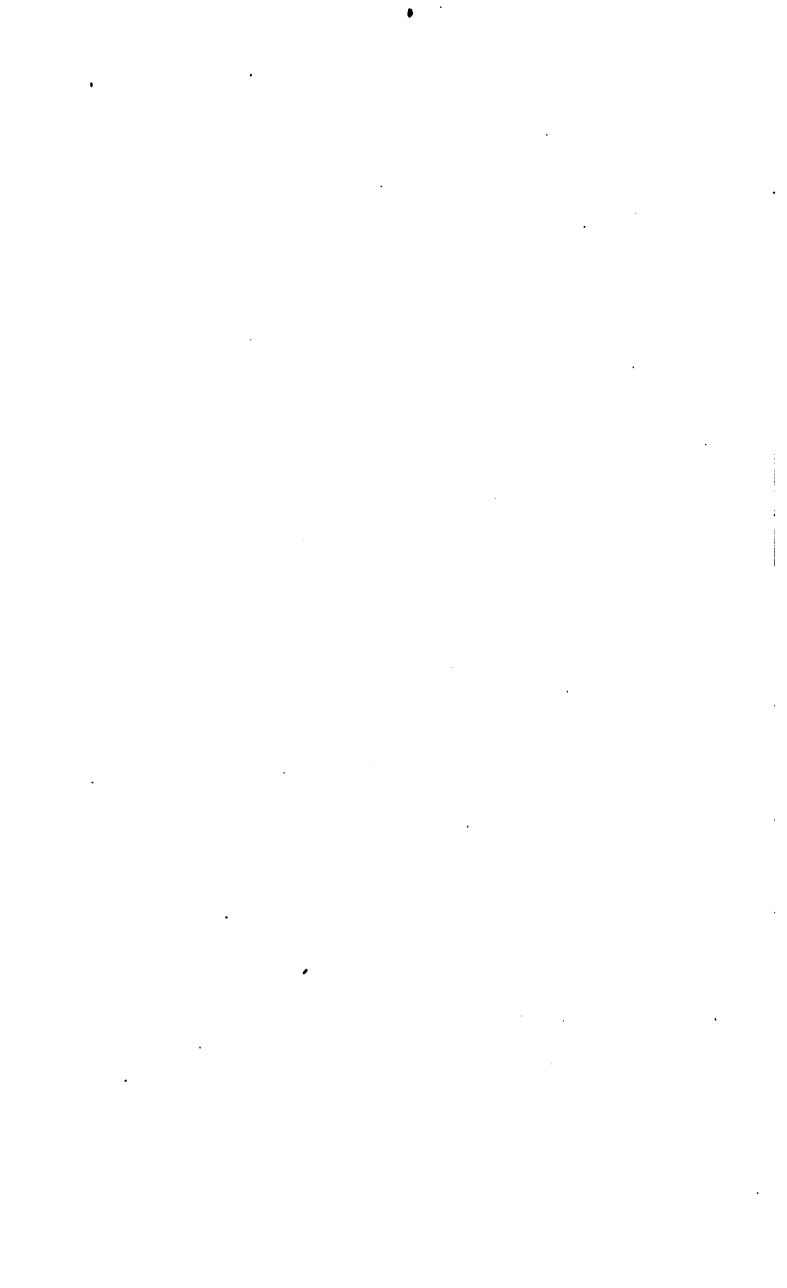
Strange that this Virgin Melody's vast flood,  
From her fierce harp, Niagara through the air  
Shakes to the drooping Heavens' sounding shield,

## *Niagara*

Shakes and re-echoes to the utmost lair  
Of Silence blindly turning in her cave,  
Has nothing of the music of Earth's God  
More than the swelling of one sullied sod  
Bride to the rain upon that English Grave !









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